

Message Text

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S/S:REWOODS

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 049992

TOSEC 27, FOR ATHERTON FROM SOBER

FOLLOWING REPEAT CAIRO 2384 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO SECDEF,
CNO WASHDC, CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON, COMSIXTHFLT & CTF 65 DATED
4 MARCH 1975:

QTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 2384

NOFORN DISSEM

FOR SECRETARY AND ASST SEC ATHERTON FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, EG

SUBJECT: SUEZ CANAL CLEARANCE OPERATIONS

1. (U). COMMANDER TASK FORCE 65 HAS RECENTLY COMPLETED A
REVIEW OF POSSIBLE FOLLOW-ON SALVAGE OPERATIONS TO BE
CONDUCTED BY RESIDUAL FORCE IN SUEZ CANAL AREA. MOST
FRUITFUL AREA FOR FURTHER OPERATIONS WITHIN RESIDUAL
FORCE CAPABILITY APPEARS TO BE PORT TAUFIQ, AT THE
SOUTHERN END OF THE CANAL.

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2. (U) THERE ARE 15 SUNKEN CRAFT OF VARIOUS DESCRIPTIONS

INSIDE BASIN OF SCA DOCKYARD AT PORT TAUFUQ. PRESENCE OF THESE WRECKS SEVERELY LIMITS USE OF BASIN, WHICH IS ESSENTIAL TO FUNCTIONING OF URGENTLY NEEDED REPAIR FACILITIES. OF 15 WRECKS, 6 ARE TOO LARGE FOR REMOVAL BY AVAILABLE SCA ASSETS, BUT WELL WITHIN USS ESCAPE CAPABILITY. CTF 65 ESTIMATES THAT ESCAPE, IN TIME SCHEDULED TO REMAIN ON STATION, CAN RAISE AT LEAST 4 OF THESE CRAFT, WITH TASK TO BE COMPLETED BY RELIEF SHIP (USS OPPORTUNE). SCA ENGINEER KASSEM SULTAN, IN CHARGE OF CANAL CLEARANCE OPERATIONS, HAS INDICATED THAT THIS ASSISTANCE WOULD BE GREATLY APPRECIATED AND WOULD BE FULLY SUPPORTED BY SCA. CTF-65 ADVISES THAT CONTEMPLATED WORK INVOLVES NO UNUSUAL HAZARD TO PERSONNEL; DIVING CONDITIONS WILL BE CLOSE TO IDEAL.

3. (U) ADDITIONAL INCREMENTAL COSTS TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH THIS WORK WILL BE VERY SMALL, AND LIMITED TO MAINTENANCE AND REPLACEMENT OF DIVING EQUIPMENT. THIS SHOULD NOT EXCEED \$2500.

4. (CNFD) I AGREE THAT THIS WORK SHOULD BE ACCOMPLISHED. IT IS MOST IMPORTANT FOR RESIDUAL FORCE TO BE GAINFULLY EMPLOYED IN VISIBLY USEFUL WORK, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF RECENT ANNOUNCEMENT OF IMMINENT RESUMPTION OF BRITISH AND FRENCH MINEHUNTER PARTICIPATION IN CANAL CLEARANCE OPERATIONS. THERE IS IN FACT A REAL DANGER THAT BRITISH/FRENCH EFFORTS AT END OF CLEARANCE OPS WILL ECLIPSE OUR OWN, AND THAT, DESPITE HAVING PERFORMED PREPONDERANCE OF WORK, WE WILL LOSE CREDIT FOR MUCH OF WHAT U.S. NAVY HAS ACCOMPLISHED.

5. (U) AFTER REVIEWING BASIC AGREEMENT BETWEEN U.S. AND GOE DATED JUNE 11, 1974, I BELIEVE CONTEMPLATED WORK TO BE MADE IN THE SCOPE OF ARTICLE 1 OF THIS AGREEMENT. IT IS ALSO CONSIDERED WITHIN SCOPE OF INSTRUCTIONS TO CTF-65 FROM HIGHER AUTHORITY IN MILITARY CHAIN OF COMMAND.

6. (C) NO COMMITMENT, OTHER THAN INITIAL SURVEY AND PROVISION OF TECHNICAL ADVICE, HAS YET BEEN MADE TO GOE OR SCA TO UNDERTAKE THIS WORK. IN ORDR FOR ESCAPE TO HAVE TIME TO ACCOMPLISH SIGNIFICANT WORK PROR TO CONFIDENTIAL

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HER DEPARTURE ABOUT 24 MARCH, HOWEVER, IT IS NECESSARY TO COMMENCE WORK ALMOST IMMEDIATELY. ACCORDINGLY, PRELIMINARY ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE FOR ESCAPE TO TRANSIT FROM ISMAILIA TO PORT TAUFUQ ON 6 MARCH. ACTUAL OPERATIONS WILL COMMENCE MARCH 7 UNLESS WE ARE ADVISED TO THE CONTRARY PRIOR THAT TIME. EILTS UNQTE INGERSOLL

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